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GENERAL
REFLECTIONS

Occasioned by the

LETTER addressed to TWO GREAT MEN,

AND THE

REMARKS on that LETTER.



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G E N E R A L

R E F L E C T I O N S, &c.

S I R,

TWO pamphlets having lately appeared, containing hints in relation to the proposed Treaty of Peace; the one intitled, A Letter to two Great Men; and the other, Remarks on that Letter: Both which writers, in the opinion of many, seem to have mistaken the interest of their country, and (however undesigned) to have yielded very great advantages, to its open and most dangerous enemies.

It has been expected, that some of the ablest heads, and best pens of this nation would have, before now, been employed to undeceive the public, and to efface the dangerous and hurtful impressions which both these letters, and especially the second of them, seems calculated to create. But as nothing of this kind has hitherto appeared, except a few loose scraps and animadversions in news papers, I have ventured to send you my thoughts on this subject, submitting them intirely to the judgment of the candid and impartial reader.

Before coming to particulars, it is necessary to observe, that however well-meaning the intention of these writers may have been, yet it seems greatly premature, for any private person, *as yet*, to point out any particular articles of peace; and, which is worse, it is in the highest degree imprudent and impolitick: Because when our enemies come to see writers of our own nation, and those perhaps of rank and character, from an excess of generosity, or worse, prescribing to our ministers the terms they are to insist upon; one of them, proposing of our own accord, voluntarily to make a present to our enemies, of all our conquests, except Canada; and the other, of all but Guadeloupe.

The transition is easy, and the road is laid open and inviting, for our enemies to insist upon and expect the restitution of the whole.— They could hardly in so doing be thought at all unreasonable, when we ourselves have encouraged them to this, in proposing to complement them with the most valuable of them, even before they are so much as demanded.

Whether these gentlemen when they wrote these letters, attended to these consequences or not, I shall not say; but it is obvious to the meanest capacity, that both their schemes encourage such a conduct.

The liberty of the press which we enjoy, is to be sure an unestimable blessing, but it is by much too often abused, to the very worst purposes; — and advantages from it to our prejudice, have even been taken by foreigners;—a recent proof of this, we have in the letters of correspondence which passed betwixt the two ministers of Charles XII. of Sweden, baron Gortz and count Gylenburg, when that wrong-headed king had, out of resentment to his late majesty, taken a resolution

tion to invade Britain, in favour of the Pretender. This conspiracy being discovered, and the letters seized, and afterwards published by the ministry: From them it appears, that among other pestiferous engines set on foot, by these two plodding ministers for completion of their scheme, one of them values himself much, upon a pamphlet which he had got wrote at London, and taken care to disperse through the nation, in order to inflame the minds of the people, and alienate them from the government, which he boasts had succeeded to admiration. — This must show, what advantage our foreign enemies may draw from a licentious liberty of the press, especially if their specious, though delusive and falacious arguments shall remain unanswered.

The first of these letters, to wit, that addressed to two Great Men, seems wrote with a masterly hand, and no ordinary pen. And in the main of his general reasoning; in his notion of the choice of plenipotentiaries; of the place where the treaty should be held, and the language in which it should be wrote; his arguments for the previous demolition of the works of Dunkirk; the necessity of hostages, and his display of the French perfidy, I hope every good Englishman will agree with him. But when he comes to treat of the particular articles: There I cannot help thinking, he seems to lose sight of the true interest of his country, at least of what appears to be the most essential and important concerns of it.

The author's whole scheme of the peace is confined to the possession of Canada, which he very inconsistently admits to be of little or no value to the French, and insinuates, that they were tired of it, and would before now, have abandoned it of their own accord, if it had not been,

been, that it afforded them the means of disturbing, and even making a conquest of our possessions in that part of the world.

As to the island of Cape Breton, though he thinks it may follow the fate of Canada, yet from a pretended frugality of saving the expence of a garrison, and on pretence that we have no use for one of the best harbours in the Western world, he thinks that its capital, Louisburg, should be demolished, and its inhabitants transported to Nova Scotia, and then he very generously proposes, “ That our good friends
“ the French may be allowed to repossess themselves of it, unfortified and ungarrisoned ; but
“ that they may not stay comfortless on this barren rock, that they be again permitted to apply themselves to the fishery there, which he
“ seems so anxious to secure for them, that he
“ thinks it would be hard and rather unreasonable
“ to exclude them from.”

On this head, it may be observed, that if the author has only in view, the future security of our colonies by the possession of Canada, — If his scheme shall be gone into ; the security proposed will prove extremely precarious, because by making the French a present of Cape Breton, and its fishery, our possession of Canada lies open to be much disturbed, and perhaps wrested from us before we can well call it our own. — The French national perfidy, he has himself pretty fully described, to which indeed much more might with great truth be added ; but admitting, the French to be a people in whom we can never place any confidence or faith, which is a point he all along contends for with great propriety, it may be asked, how are we to keep and secure Canada ? Our author does not tell us. — For a-
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gainst such a neighbourhood as Cape Breton, in the hands of our enemies, it is evident it can only be done, by keeping up a great regular force there: — For as the public exercise of the Roman Catholic religion, will probably be continued to the inhabitants at the peace, we can never expect they will be faithful subjects to our government, especially as their priests will be incessantly employed in alienating their minds from us, and debauching and corrupting the Indians; in which they will be greatly encouraged and assisted by their friends at Cape Breton, from whom they will be continually furnished with money, arms and ammunition, till a fit time shall offer for their appearing in arms.

But says our author, “Louisburg is to be razed, and by a few ships stationed at Halifax, we may prevent them from re-fortifying it.” This is strange language, after what our author himself has told us, and all the world knows, how the French have behaved in relation to Dunkirk, where though every day in sight of England, they ventured to carry on their works, in defiance of the most positive and explicate words of the treaty; and when challenged by us for so doing, they had the astonishing impudence to refuse the fact, even after we had sent persons to the spot, to view it, who had reported it to be true, as having seen it with their eyes.

And can we suppose, or have we the least reason to expect, that their conduct in this respect, would be altered for the better in the other quarter of the Globe, where their temptation for violating a treaty, is infinitely greater than in the case of Dunkirk. — I think from what is past, we have reason to conclude, that if Cape Breton was just now restored to them with Louisburg demolished

molished as proposed, yet they are so sensible of its importance, that they would have it rebuilt, and put in a state of defence before the end of the present year. — And if we should remonstrate against this as a breach of the treaty; the fact would, and could more easily be denied, than in the case of Dunkirk; and however much we were convinced of its truth, yet I doubt if our ministers would venture, on that account alone to enter upon a new war, when we had just begun to taste the sweets of peace, on the conclusion of a war which had involved us in great debt, and had otherwise put the nation to such immense expences.

The importance of Cape Breton itself, and its fishery, which our author so generously proposes to make the French a present of, has not, as yet, been spoke to; and seems by him quite overlook't. — It is certain, that all our writers on this subject, for these many years past, have represented Cape Breton fishery, as the French golden mines, and the grand nursery for their best sailors. — I have seen an estimate of the value of this island to that nation, in which it is asserted, that it gives employment to 24,000 sailors, and that the annual profits and produce, arising to France from the fishery there, is betwixt 900,000, and a million sterling.

Nor is this all, the harbour of Louisburg (being the only one they had in N. America, on the ocean) is allowed to be, next to Halifax, the best and safest in all America. — And when it is considered, that in all that great Continent, there are very few harbours sufficient for receiving and keeping our great ships of war in safety. — It does not seem a thing of small importance, to add one of the best in that part of the world to the
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the few good ones, we have got there, besides the advantage of keeping this beneficial port out of the hands of our rivals and enemies, the situation whereof is very convenient for annoying our Newfoundland trade, and distressing that of all our colonies in N. America, besides being in a manner the key to the great gulph and river of St. Lawrence.

The pretended advantage of being saved from the expence of a garrison there, is a mere allusion, because if we keep Canada and restore Cape Breton, it will be necessary, I presume, that pretty strong garrisons be kept both in Canada and Nova Scotia, whereas, if Cape Breton is retained, these garrisons may be considerably diminished when freed of the French neighbourhood, and 500 men in Louisburg will be sufficient for keeping the place in time of peace, when the works are kept in proper repair, and some of our ships of war are paying an annual visit to that island.

If the question should turn, whether we ought to keep Cape Breton or Canada, I should think there need be little dubiety in the choice, because the possession of Cape Breton, and the exclusion of the French from the fishery, in consequence thereof, seems of much greater importance than Canada: — Because when the former is in our hands, and the fortifications of Quebec and Montreal and the other forts in Canada being demolished, though the country itself, confined within proper limits, were restored to the French, I can see no great prejudice it could do us, when the river St. Lawrence is fixed as the boundary, and its navigation made equally common to both nations, and all our forts at Crown-point and Southwards kept up. It is plain the French must derive very little advantage from Canada

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thus situate, nor could they at all hurt us ; whereas upon the first rupture, by our possession of Cape Breton, Canada must again fall into our hands. Indeed as they have proved such troublesome neighbours, I could wish to see them forever excluded from having it in their power to be so in time to come.

As the author's passion for Canada makes him overlook the advantages of Cape Breton. — So on pretence of the disagreeable situation of the king of Prussia and our allies on the Continent, he is for dropping and giving back all our other acquisitions. — “ He says we have already enough
“ of sugar islands, and so have no use for Gau-
“ daloupe, and though he seems to admit Se-
“ negal and Goree to be valuable settlements, on
“ account of the slave and gum trade. — Yet he
“ says, though possession of these places does
“ not sufficiently compensate for the mortality
“ of our brave countrymen.”

To this it may be answered ; that the situation of the king of Prussia, and our allies on the Continent, are by no means at present more dangerous than they have been every year this war, and indeed hardly so much. — For though this last campaign, did not turn out quite so well, as formerly, for his Prussian majesty, yet things are in such a situation, that he is as yet possessor of more valuable parts of his enemy's possessions, than they are of his. — No doubt such a formidable and shameful confederacy against him, has exhausted him much both in men and money. But have not his enemies been more than equal sufferers in this respect ; though it must be owned, they have greater resources in these articles, yet considering the subsidy and other assistance by land
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he has from us, and that its now generally believed, a powerful British fleet, will soon make its appearance in the Baltick on his behalf.—I incline to think, his affairs look as far from a desperate state, as they have done any year of this war.

The affairs of our other allies on the Continent seem rather better, for by frequent trials of skill, they have in every instance overmatched their antagonists, whose superiority of numbers has been greatly overbalanced by the superior conduct and bravery of the generals and troops of the allies, who, besides the powerful incentive of fighting *pro avis & foveis*, have also the power of Britain to be occasionally employed in their behalf.

The annual alarms of mighty armies and invasions propagated at Brussels and Versailles begin to lose much of their force, because though we have been every year accustomed to hear of the absolute conquest of Hanover and Hesse, and the territories of Prussia, being compleated in idea, in the cabinets of Versailles and Vienna, yet the fifth year of the war does not seem to promise them better grounds for realising these romantick dreams, than any of the preceding.—At any rate, it is hardly to be thought, that the French could as things stand betwixt us and them, with any propriety, expect higher and more favourable terms of peace, though our allies were every where beat out of the field, and their enemies in actual possession of the greatest part of their territories, than our author seems disposed to give them, in case they meet with the least unfavourable rub this campaign.

That we have no occasion for any more sugar-islands, is, I dare say, *gratis dictum*, because I believe it is admitted, that before the war, we had barely sufficient for our own consumption, while the French had not only a sufficiency for theirs, but such a quantity more as threw into their hands the whole foreign market; to which we had little or none to send. — Sugar, it is now known, is become a very extensive and necessary article in life, and besides the advantages of our having a share in the profits of a foreign market in that commodity, it ought to be attended to, as no inconsiderable benefit, that by the possession of Gaudeloupe, this island is so far an extension of our trade, that there are perhaps 100,000 additional persons fed with the produce, and served and furnished with the manufactures of Great Britain. — And as its owned, Senegal and Goree, are valuable acquisitions, not only in the slave trade, in which we may be served cheaper than formerly, but in the gum-trade which can be had no where else, except in that particular place. The insinuation therefore, of some accidental mortality, ought not to prevail on us, tamely to part with them, or otherways, I am afraid, many more of our valuable possessions in the West-Indies should be abandoned for the same reasons.

Our authors last concession and proposal, appears to be the most extraordinary of all. “ He
 “ hopes and expects the king of Prussia, and our
 “ other allies may be able to stand their ground
 “ at least for this year. — Yet he is at any rate
 “ for abandoning all our *Conquests*, which we
 “ either have made, or may make, except Ca-
 “ nada.”

“ nada.” And for what? why for an idle bugbear, to wit, that the French be obliged “ To
 “ relinquish the possession of Ostend and New-
 “ port, (he does not say to whom) which are
 “ two places, he says, an English minister must
 “ tremble at seeing in their hands.” — Strange rhodomontade, the English nation and ministry, saw these places in the French hands in 1745, not only in a time, of an open rupture with that crown, but of a dangerous rebellion raising in the heart of Britain:—And in whose possession they remained all that war thereafter, till the peace in 1748.—On breaking out of the present war, they were again most perfidiously put into their hands, and yet as they are incapable of receiving great ships, I never heard of any remarkable injuries or damage sustained by our trade, or nation, through the French being possessors of these places.

It may be once for all observed, that if our ministers were to adopt the sentiments of this writer, and pay the value for these towns, which he proposes, it would be always well worth the attention of the French court, to purchase, or even to procure a lend of these two places from the empress queen, whenever they had a view of breaking with us, and they would make a cheap bargain although they gave her imperial majesty for the loan, as much silver specie as would pave the streets of both cities, with that article.

I have now done with the author of the first Letter.—The second, to wit the Remarks, hardly merits so minute a discussion, because his performance seems wrote with so little delicacy in point of regard to his country, and betrays so strong

strong a bias in favour of its enemies, that it is much to be suspected if it is the work of an Englishman ; or if it is, it looks like the labour of some mercenary scribbler, the hireling of some selfish and bad-hearted party among us. — Through the whole of it indeed, it breathes as little of the patriot spirit, as ever dropt from an English pen.

He begins with finding fault with the former writer, for his insisting on the honour of the nation, and that our enemies should be previously obliged to fulfil former treaties — This he modestly terms arrogance, and his proposal to keep Canada, he seems to think would be both an unjust and improper conquest. — However, he proposes we may try to keep Guadaloupe (the advantages of which he mightily exaggerates, it is suspected much beyond bounds) and that we should drop all our other conquests. — For though here and there, in loose sentences, he sometimes seems to speak, as if some more might be kept, yet towards the close of his letter, page 30th, he says positively, in so many words, “ That if we *can be allowed* to retain Guadaloupe, we need not ask for more.”

Allowed to retain, has a strange sound, and all things considered, is equally strange language from an English writer.

The author falls very heavy on his brother-writer, for his insisting so strenuously on keeping Canada. Why? because, says he, Canada is no part of our claim in our declaration of war. A very fine reason. No more is Guadaloupe. — But then, says he, tho’ neither can be claimed by right, yet Guadaloupe being, in his opinion, the most valuable of the two, may be retained
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(if we be allowed) by way of indemnification. But this preference in value, will not be quite so easily yielded to him, and indeed can hardly be pretended, if Cape Breton be kept as well as Canada. One thing seems evident from this gentleman's calculations of value, that he has the misfortune to have the ministers of France and England, as well as every sensible disinterested man, in both nations, in an opposite way of thinking to him on this head. Because it is certain and notorious, that ten times the force and expence has been employed in the attack and defence of Cape Breton and Canada, and forts adjacent, than what was employ'd in the reduction of Guadaloupe; and if the value of the latter, so far surpasses that of all the former, then both nations, and their ministers, have all been guilty of the most egregious folly and madness.

This author's notion of right and arrogance, with all due deference to his self-sufficiency, seems extremely singular. But to set this matter in a proper light, it will be necessary to take a view of the grounds of the present war, and who gave the provocation, and were the aggressors. — On this head I should think very little needs be said. — Even this author has not ventured to insinuate that this lies at the door of Britain. Because it is a fact universally known and agreed on all hands, by all parties among us, and I dare say is believed by, and known to most of the neutral powers of Europe. — That the French were the wanton, unprovoked aggressors. That no sooner was the treaty of Aix la Chapelle signed, than they began their encroachments in America, and hostilities in the East Indies. — That they pro-

proceeded from one act of violence and injustice to another, which we bore for many years, with a stoical patience. That they added insult to violence, by keeping up a farce of a treaty for settling the limits of the American territories, while at the same time their governours and troops in America, were seizing and possessing themselves of all the countries in dispute, and even of some which they had not so much as claimed. — 'Till at last their perfidy, murders and robberies grew to such a height, as awaken'd the whole nation out of their supineness and lethargy. — When they beheld themselves in imminent danger of being stript of all their valuable possessions and settlements in that part of the world upon which the trade, and the very being and independency of this nation in a great measure depends.

It is therefore insisted and apparent, that we were most grievously injured, and forced into the war, fore against our wills. — And since it has pleased Providence to bless our arms with uncommon success, in the prosecution of this just and necessary war, we must be greatly wanting to ourselves, and little better than guilty of *felo de se*, if we shall from a wanton affected moderation to our inveterate and most dangerous enemy, abandon without any visible necessity, all, or the greater part of these advantages. — Nay further, such pretended compliance and moderation must appear the highest injustice and cruelty to our own people, who have been loaded with grievous taxes, and thirty or forty millions sterling of additional debt, for carrying on the war; all which they have cheerfully submitted to, from

from the prospect of the additional advantages in point of trade and commerce which they expect, and in reason and justice hope for, when it is concluded.

These expences (independent of the British blood that has been or may be yet spilt) indeed, have been so considerable, that we can hardly flatter ourselves, that all our acquisitions can fully and adequately compensate for some ages yet to come.

And this being the case, the gentleman's bluster of the danger of being brought to the bar of Europe, must appear in the highest degree ridiculous! For where is the arrogance or injustice, if we shall present ourselves at the bar of all the powers on earth, and tell our antagonists, and the whole world, that being unjustly forced into the war, and involved by the prosecution of it in immense charges, we are determined, and really under a necessity (having a right, by all the laws of nations and equity) to retain the possessions acquired from our ambitious enemies by the force of our arms, to help to indemnify the nation for these expences, which their boundless ambition has forced us to disburse.

What power can, in propriety, call this arrogant or unjust, or who has a right to do so, or to take on them to be our judge, and order us to relinquish the smallest and least valuable of them? And however our enemies may gasconade, we have no great reason to apprehend they will soon be in a condition to compel us by force. — What then in the name of wonder, should prevail on us to sacrifice our national interest and concerns

The mention of the other powers of Europe, has a sound without any solid meaning. — Suppose any of them should be so much Quixote, as to embark in a war against us, out of compliance to France, — which is hardly to be supposed, — yet, as I take it, the only powers in Europe, who have it in their power to give us any real disturbance, are three; the most powerful of whom, to wit, France we are now at open war with; the second, Holland is also in a state of hurtful practices against us, by taking part with our enemies, covering their trade, furnishing them with shipping and military stores of all kinds, and in many respects, doing us more real mischief than they could do, if engaged in open war against us, while at the same time, the shew of peace ties up our hands from letting them feel the weight of our resentment. — And as to the third of these powers, Spain, they are too sensible of the advantages of a peace with this nation, to be induced rashly to engage in a war against us, without any quarrel of their own; because from such a war, unprovoked, they could have little to hope: But as things are presently situate, a great deal to fear.

Indeed, the gentleman's reason, why we should sacrifice our most valuable and undoubted rights and concerns, out of dread, or if he will, out of compliance to the other powers of Europe, is equally ridiculous, and of a piece, with the reason assigned by Maubert, the writer of the Brüssel's Gazette, why we should not beat our enemies when we meet with them, because, says he, "The English will go on, from success to success, till in the end, they unite all the powers of Europe against them."

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The pretext therefore of arrogance and dread of offending the other powers of Europe is groundless, and an empty phantom. — I doubt there are few if any nations, who ever thought of parting with their immediate interests, and most valuable advantages, for fear of offending the other neutral powers of Europe; and if the gentleman thinks otherwise, he must have forgot, or be but little acquainted with the modern history of Europe,

Did any of the powers of Europe interpose to compell our Henry Vth to relinquish his conquests, when he was in possession of the French throne and capital.

What right have the French to the province of Normandy and other districts of France, formerly the undoubted property of the crown of England, but that of conquest; — is her title any better to many provinces she possesses in Flanders, and Germany, most of whom were the fruits of very unjust wars.

What better title than conquest have the Russians, to the several provinces they possess, and wrested from Sweden, in the war with Charles XII. — The Spaniards right to the rich countries of Naples and Sicily, are on the same foundation, — as is that of the house of Austria to many of their possessions; — some of which, they hold by worse titles, because on pretence of some of them being fiefs of the Empire, they seized them, but in place of annexing them to the Imperial dignity, they appropriated them all to the further aggrandisement of their own hereditary patrimonial estate.

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Our own right to Jamaica stands on the footing of conquest, and yet I believe that neither we, nor any of the other powers, would tamely submit to part with the least of these possessions, either out of complisance to, or dread of all the other powers on earth.

Again, is it not known, that the Spaniards take upon them to exclude all nations from their American ports, and even from navigating in the South Seas. — The Dutch have ingrossed to themselves the whole Spice Islands, from which they have excluded all other nations; and we have more than a century ago, established a law, to which all nations must and do submit, which is a step more humbling, and in the author's words more arrogant, than that of previously insisting on our faithless neighbours, to fullfil their anterior violated faith: And that is, by obliging the ships of all nations to strike to our king's ships of war in the narrow seas. Nay, so far has this point of honour been pursued, that we know it was given as the cause of a war with one of our most powerful neighbours; — and yet I believe no instance can be shewn, where any of these arrogant systems produced a confederacy for suppressing them among the other powers of Europe.

From all which the absurdity, not to say, the treachery, of that vain suggestion that we must not do ourselves justice, and improve the advantages, of which we are posselt, for fear of giving offence to an imaginary phantom, as I think, abundantly aparent and obvious, being a consideration which no nation was ever yet frighten'd with, so as to forget their own interests, and which indeed no wise people did ever regard.

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And therefore since neither the situation of our friends on the Continent, nor yet the idle bugbear of the other powers of Europe, are such as should impell us to make a sacrifice of our most valuable concerns, I am sure this necessity must still appear less cogent when the comparison is drawn betwixt the present different situation of affairs with France and us. — On their part, their romantick, as well as unjust expeditions and invasions by sea and land, have reduced their government to the high-way, or which is the same thing, has forced their ministers to break all faith both with their own people and foreigners, by seizing on private property, and refusing payment of their public debts. — This added to the disgraces they have met with in every quarter of the globe, and that they have seen themselves stripped of their most valuable possessions; and every sensible man among them trembling for the fate of those that remain: All this does not present them with the most promising ideas, from the continuation of the war. And as happily the reverse of all this is our case. — Although we have been unavoidably involved in very great expences, yet our trade and credit are both in such a flourishing way by the advantages obtained in the war, that our ministers have still many and great resources for carrying it on, without any danger of a national bankruptcy. The surest way to avoid which is, to make a right use and improvement of these advantages which Providence, during the course of this war, has put into our hands.

And now having said this much in opposition to the sentiments of these two learned gentlemen: — I would not have it thought, that I am
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of the number of those who endeavour to confirm the people in headstrong and unreasonable expectations. I am very sensible, that many things (not known, or fit to be known by the public) may occur, which may justly prevail on our ministers, to drop several advantages, nor do I think any honest Briton should for every trivial matter wish to retard the great blessing of peace, when it may be procured on solid and lasting foundations.—But I am sure neither the one scheme nor the other proposed by these two letter writers, can be said to intend this invaluable blessing for us, on terms consistent with the honour and interest of this country.—On the contrary, it is to be feared, their letters may have a tendency to divide us, and so weaken the hands of our ministers; because it is obvious, that both plans are so much calculated for the advantage of France, that their ministry, if they had hopes that such would be listened to, on our part, might make offer of them, and if they should be rejected, then a very great clamour and distress might be brought upon our government, by such as were impressed with the sufficiency of the terms, as they would be accused of prolonging, they would say unnecessarily, an expensive bloody war after proper and equitable terms of peace had been offered.—And this, by the by, must further illustrate the danger as well as bad policy to point out, as yet, any particular terms of peace and propagate such notions among the people.

Upon the whole, the performances of these gentlemen, must, I think, appear to be at least highly unseasonable and improper, to say no worse. Our ministers have conducted the war hitherto,
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in a way, that must render them immortal honour. — And I confess in my humble opinion, their past conduct and known abilities, intitles them justly to so much credit from their country, that they may in all safety be trusted with the management of the negotiations for peace, when such shall commence, without any one taking on them to prescribe beforehand, what, or what not, should be the particular terms and conditions of this treaty.

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